



December 16, 2004



Jury convicts Providence man of weapons charge

A federal jury today convicted **Lenard Gibson**, of Providence, of being a felon in possession of firearms. In September, **Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives** agents arrested Gibson after he illegally bought two handguns at an East Providence gun shop. Gibson, who has several prior drug-trafficking convictions, faces a minimum 15-year prison sentence as an Armed Career Criminal.

United States Attorney Robert Clark Corrente announced the verdict, which the jury reached after about 2 and ½ hours of deliberation and a two-day trial before U.S. District Court Judge Mary M. Lisi in U.S. District Court, Providence.

During the trial, Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard W. Rose presented evidence that, in early September, Gibson went to E.P. Firearms, Inc., and placed a deposit on a pistol. He told the store owner that he couldn't legally buy the gun himself but would have someone else fill out the application for him. The store owner notified ATF, which monitored the remainder of the transaction.

The following day, Gibson went to the store with another individual, who completed applications to buy two handguns – a Glock .45 caliber pistol and a Bryco .380 caliber pistol. On September 16, when the store owner notified Gibson that the seven-day waiting period had

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expired and the guns could be picked up, the individual who had completed the application was unavailable. Gibson picked the guns up himself and was arrested as he left the store with the guns.

Ordinarily, being a felon in possession of a firearm carries a statutory maximum penalty of ten years in federal prison and a \$250,000 fine. However, because of Gibson's prior drug-trafficking convictions, the government will recommend that he be sentenced as an Armed Career Criminal, which carries 15-year minimum. Federal sentencing is determined on the basis of guidelines that rely on such factors as the specific nature of an offense and a defendant's criminal background, if any. Sentencing is scheduled for April 1.

Since his arrest, Gibson, 28, of 301 Cranston Street, has been detained at the Wyatt Federal Detention Center, Central Falls.

ATF investigated the case, with assistance from **East Providence Police**. Assistant U.S. Attorney Rose is prosecuting it as part of **Project Safe Neighborhoods**, a Department of Justice initiative against gun crimes. Under Project Safe Neighborhoods, the U.S. Attorney's Office, working with Providence Police, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Rhode Island Attorney General's Office, and other agencies, aggressively prosecutes federal firearms offenses in an effort to incarcerate those responsible for gun violence and deter others from committing gun crimes. Since 2001, federal firearms prosecutions in Rhode Island have more than doubled and gun offenders have been sentenced to a total of more than 550 years in federal prison.

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